"GT" 11/4/06

TURMOIL AT NEW LIFE CHURCH

CONFRONTING A SCANDAL

HAGGARD COULD HEAR FATE SUNDAY AT CHURCH

BARRY GUTIERREZ, ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Rev. Ted Haggard drove from his home Friday with his wife, Gayle. Haggard admitted Friday that he bought methamphetamine and received a massage from Mike Jones, who claims he was paid for drug-fueled trysts by the pastor of New Life Church.

Business, civic leaders fret about city's image

By **RICH LADEN**
THE GAZETTE

Most days, business people and politicians bask in the glow of Colorado Springs' ranking as Money Magazine's best big city, or The Broadmoor's rating as one of the top hotels or even the 300 days of sunshine that blanket the community each year.

But as allegations of a sexual relationship between New Life Church's the Rev. Ted Haggard and a Denver male prostitute widened Friday, business people and civic leaders who preferred to talk jobs and quality of life were left to wonder if the latest onslaught of national media attention would hurt the city's image.

Scandal brings national media attention to the Springs. **Page 11**

Right now, the Haggard story isn't something Tim Harvey wants to talk about when he recruits employees to his local software company.

"In the short term, this certainly doesn't help us," said Harvey, chief executive of XAware Inc. "I will probably delay some of my recruiting

SEE **SPOTLIGHT** • PAGE 12

SAYS HE BOUGHT METH BUT DIDN'T USE DRUG

Mike Jones: Denies selling drugs to Ted Haggard. He submitted to a polygraph, and the test detected some deception.

By **DAVE PHILIPPS** and **PAUL ASAY**
THE GAZETTE

Standing before thousands of followers, the Rev. Ted Haggard prayed from the pulpit last Sunday for lies and deceptions to be exposed.

This Sunday, he will address those same people at New Life Church for the first time since he admitted to buying methamphetamine and seeking a massage from a gay prostitute.

Haggard also could hear about his own fate as leader of the church he built from his basement in 1985. At the Sunday services, a group of pastors plans to address a congregation reeling from the allegation by a Denver man that Haggard paid him for sex over a three-year period.

After Mike Jones' claims, Haggard on Friday admitted he bought methamphetamine but maintained he never had sex with Jones and never used the drug.

"I bought it for myself but never used it. I was tempted

SEE **SCANDAL** • PAGE 10

Is Haggard 'bringing down Jesus' and GOP?

With elections coming up, experts say the scandal at New Life Church could have a profound impact on the political landscape. **Page 11**

Audio, video, stories – it's all at Gazette.com

Check out audio of Haggard's Oct. 29 sermon, statements from New Life and Focus on the Family, as well as video clips at **gazette.com**

Gay-rights activists feel bad for Haggard

Several express sympathy for New Life founder. Some say they hope he can now understand their daily struggles, and some hope he changes his views. **Page 10**

A blessing during tough times at New Life Church

The church's acting leader, Ross Parsley, became a father to a baby boy Friday. Parsley had served as a worship pastor at the church since 1991. **Page 11**

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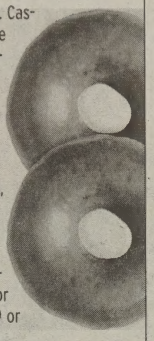
4 TODAY

ART

EXHIBIT RECEPTION: "BOOK AS OBJECT": 4:30 p.m., Colorado College, Coburn Gallery, main floor of Worner Campus Center, 902 N. Cascade Ave. Performance by exhibited artist Angela Lorenz, free; 389-6606 or 389-6607.



CHILDREN

"TWO DONUTS": 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Nov. 4, 2 p.m. Nov. 5, Theater at Venue 515, Business of Art Center, 515 Manitou Ave., Manitou Springs. A play for children, $8; 685-4729 or www.themat.org.

MUSIC

WORLD MUSIC SERIES: HUUN-HUUR-TU: 7:30 p.m., Shove Memorial Chapel, 1010 N. Nevada Ave., free; 531-6333, ext. 1234 or online at ppld.org.

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL: 9 p.m., Cowboys, 3910 Palmer Park Blvd., $15-$19; 596-1212.

POTPOURRI

DREAMPOWER ANIMAL RESCUE'S EIGHTH ANNUAL "WHISKERS & WINE" FUNDRAISER: 6-10 p.m., Giuseppe's Old Depot Restaurant, 10 S. Sierra Madre St. Dinner, silent auction, guest speakers and more. $50 in advance, $60 at the door; 390-7838 or www.dreampower-arf.com.

WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN RALLY: 7 p.m., World Arena, 3185 Venetucci Blvd. The world's largest effort by men working to end men's violence against women, free; 389-6606 or 389-6607.

5 SUNDAY

ART

ARVADA CENTER CELEBRATES 30 YEARS: 1-4 p.m., Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd., Arvada. Free; 1-720-898-7200.

CLASSES

"SPECIAL CHANNELLING: "CHANNEL OF 12": 1-4 p.m., Celebration Conscious Living Store, 2209 W. Colorado Ave. $55 in advance, $65 at the door; Dove, 205-6525.

"FLOORING SOLUTIONS": 1 p.m., Home Depot, 102 N. Academy Blvd., 573-7000; 7120 N. Academy Blvd., 531-6400; 5660 E. Woodmen Road, 266-5165; and 2250 Southgate Road, 471-0054, free.

MUSIC

RECYCLED PERCUSSION: 7:30 p.m., Colorado College, Armstrong Hall, 14 E. Cache La Poudre St. General admission tickets are $20, free tickets for CC ID holders. Tickets available at 902 N. Cascade Ave.; 389-6607.

POTPOURRI

ADOPTION FAIR: 2:30-5 p.m., Woodmen Valley Chapel, 290 E. Woodmen Road. Several agencies representing domestic and international adoptions, as well as foster adoptions, free; 388-4953.

6 MONDAY

CLASSES

"FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT AND THE VOICES OF WORLD WAR II": 9:30-11:30 a.m. The role of FDR is portrayed by Richard Marold, $20. Location and registration: 633-4991 or www.visitpillar.org.

FOOD

51ST ANNUAL PILGRIM'S PROGRESS DINNER: 6 p.m., East United Methodist Church, Fellowship Hall, 1505 E. Monument St. Pre-Thanksgiving holiday dinner and music by the Colorado Springs Children's Chorale. 634-2801.

LECTURES

"PRESIDENTIAL POWERS IN THE POST 9/11 WORLD": 7 p.m., Colorado College, Gates Common Room, third floor of Palmer Hall, 1025 N. Cascade Ave. Presented by Presidential Scholar Tom Cronin, free; 651-3001.

POTPOURRI

READING WITH "WINKIE" AUTHOR CLIFFORD CHASE: 6:30 p.m., Colorado College, Jerome P. McHugh Student Commons, above the Herb 'n' Farm Cafe, in the Western Ridge Housing Complex, 1090 N. Cascade Ave. Chase will read passages from his new novel and sign books, free; 389-6606 or 389-6607.

CELEBRATION OF DIWALI AND EID UL-FITR: 6 p.m., Colorado College, Gaylord Hall, main floor of Worner Campus Center, 902 N. Cascade Ave. To educate and raise awareness of South Asian culture, free; 389-6606 or 389-6607.

7 TUESDA

BOOKS

BOOK SIGNING: 7 p.m., Pik
munity College, Centennial C
S. Academy Blvd. Deborah S.
will discuss and sign "If We
it Doesn't Matter," free; Sora
538-5506.

LECTURES

MILITARY SPEAKERS LUN
11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Sheraton Co
Springs Hotel, 2886 S. Circle
speaker will be Maj. Gen. Eri
man. Cost is $25 for Colorad
Chamber of Commerce and r
bers, $30 for nonmembers. R
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POTPOURR

KOREAN AMERICAN STUD
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of Palmer Hall, 1025 N. Casca
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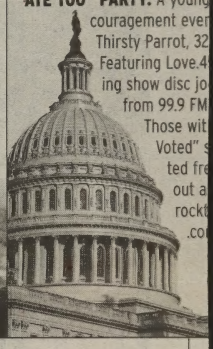

MORE CALENDARS: See Sports and Business on Sunday, Food on Wednesday, GO! and Out There on Friday, and the Life section on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

ONLINE: For even more events, go to gazette.com and click on Metro/State

See Our Sunday Wrap for More Products!

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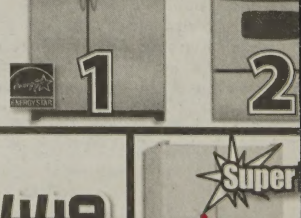

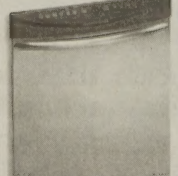

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TURMOIL AT NEW LIFE CHURCH

MEDIA

All eyes on the Springs thanks to global news

"This is a national story because Haggard is a national figure."
JEFF THOMAS – editor of The Gazette

By ANDREW WINEKE
THE GAZETTE

As satellite TV trucks huddled in the parking lot at New Life Church, viewers around the world got bombarded with news about the Ted Haggard scandal.

Every news outlet from Al-Jazeera to Reuters India carried the story, most topping their news reports Friday with it.

"Now, a story about a prominent evangelical Christian leader caught up in a scandal ..." "Tonight, a test of faith ..." "What Pastor Ted Haggard is saying tonight about ..."

Reporters from CNN, NBC, The Associated Press, The Washington Post and The New York Times joined local and Denver media to make this one of the biggest stories to come out of Colorado Springs.

KKTV/Channel 11 — which broke into "Late Show with David Letterman" on Thursday night with David Nancarrow's scoop that New Life Church confirmed some of the allegations against Haggard were true — juggled requests for video from Court TV, Inside Edition and CNN. The BBC called Nancarrow looking for an interview at 3 a.m. Friday.

"There's a ton of national interest," said Nick Matesi, KKTV's news director. "He's an important political and religious figure. I think the national guys get that."

Media circus? Sure. Unprecedented? Nearly.

KRDO/Channel 13 news director Dave Rose, who's been in local news for more than 30 years, said this is about as much national attention as he's ever seen focused on Colorado Springs.

"Big story, no doubt about it," he said.

Rose said the Texas Seven case in 2001, in which a group of prison escapees holed up in Woodland Park and Colorado Springs, might be the only story that tops this.

Gazette Editor Jeff Thomas, who has covered Colorado Springs for 19 years, said the Texas Seven story was dramatic, but lacked the national impact of the current scandal.

"There will be dateline Colorado Springs stories popping up tomorrow in national publications that begin 'At the foot of Pikes Peak,'" Thomas said. "This is a national story because Haggard is a national figure."

Much of the national media's coverage focused on the scandal's potential impact on next week's elections.

One exception to the avalanche of attention was Fox News, which had the story in its headlines, but did only short stories on the subject.

But the 24-hour news machine is always hungry for new stories.

By Friday afternoon, the story had dropped to the second spot on the CBS Evening News and the third on NBC Nightly News. But it remained the top story on Google news.

By next week, Thomas predicted, the Haggard story will be just an element of the national election coverage.

"The election, I think, is going to wash over this," he said. "What happened this week will be part of the election story."

POLITICS

Separating church and GOP?

Scandal could sway the evangelical vote

THE GAZETTE AND NEWS SERVICES

The Rev. Ted Haggard's sudden fall from the pinnacle of the religious world could have just as stunning an impact in the political arena.

David Kuo, a born-again Christian and former White House aide who wrote the book "Tempting Faith: An Inside Story of Political Seduction," said Haggard's predicament is magnified by his and other evangelicals' involvement in Republican politics.

"It's religious hypocrisy with a political rocket booster," said Kuo, who thinks politics is corrupting Christianity. "It's tragedy enough if a pastor falls, but this is not about a pastor falling. This is about a politician falling, and the politician is bringing down Jesus with him."

Stephen Bennett, a conservative activist who describes himself as a former homosexual, also suggested the scandal would have consequences beyond Colorado Springs, where Haggard's New Life Church is located.

"Will this affect the elections next Tuesday?" he wrote from the Huntington, Conn., headquarters of Stephen Bennett Ministries. "You better believe it. The more and more hypocrisy I see each day, the more I realize next Tuesday we are going to get exactly what we deserve."

Meanwhile, groups for and against Colorado ballot measures dealing with gay rights and the definition of marriage were mostly silent Friday about how Tuesday's election might be influenced by allegations that Haggard paid for sex with a male prostitute.

Coloradans for Marriage, a supporter of Amendment 43, issued the only statement, saying, "We will not let this distract us with our efforts to pass the Colorado Marriage Amendment to define marriage as a union between one man and one woman."

All other committees, for or against Amendment 43 and Referendum I, which would provide for domestic partnerships, wouldn't comment.

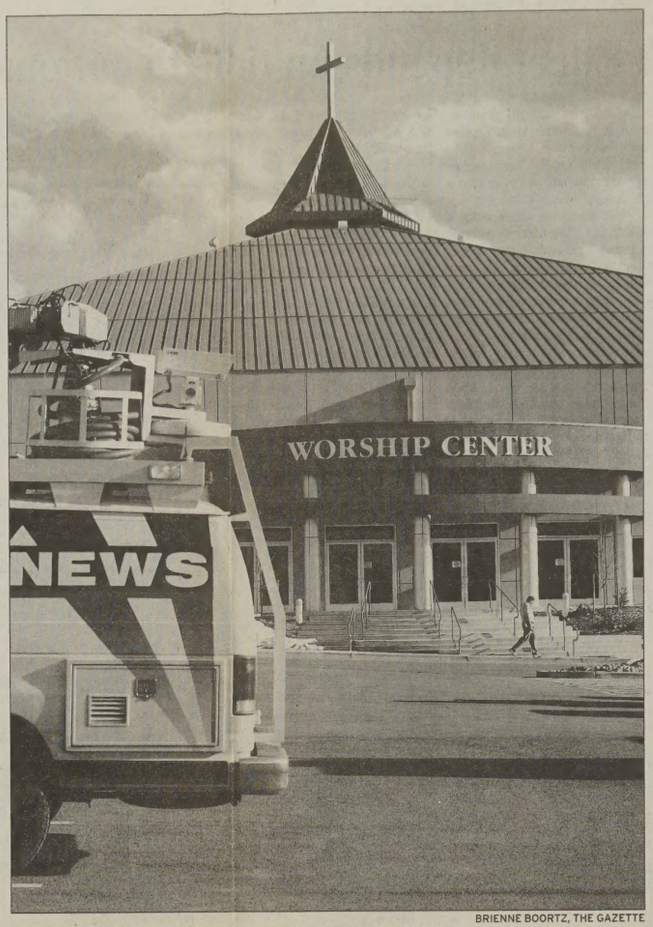
Among those who ventured opinions, most said it was difficult to predict if it would have immediate or long-term effects.

John Green, a senior fellow at the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life in Washington, D.C., said Haggard wasn't associated with voter mobilization efforts nationally.

"Although he's known, he's known as a religious leader," he said, rather than a champion for political issues.

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, said Haggard's situation may discourage Republicans from "turning over their party to the religious right."

But long term? "I don't think the evidence is in whether this will have the deep and lasting effect that it should," he said.



BRIENNE BOORTZ, THE GAZETTE

Local and national media crews descended Friday on New Life Church after allegations that the church's now-former leader Ted Haggard paid a Denver man for sex and drugs.

> "Will this affect the elections next Tuesday? You better believe it. The more and more hypocrisy I see each day, the more I realize next Tuesday we are going to get exactly what we deserve."
> **STEPHEN BENNETT** – conservative activist

Robert Jones, director and senior fellow at the Center for American Values and Public Life at the People for the American Way Foundation in Washington, D.C., said, "It might depress support among followers, should these allegations turn out to be true, who are demoralized that their spokesperson on these issues would take such a fall. Or it could galvanize people."

Colorado College political science professor Bob Loevy predicted social conservatives would flock to the polls in protest of the timing of claims by Mike Jones, a Denver man, that Haggard paid him for sex and drugs.

The allegations also might affect the direction of the evangelical movement, several observers said.

Haggard tried to shift Christian evangelicals' focus toward issues such as the environment and poverty rather than dwelling on social conservative touchstones such as abortion and homosexuality.

People for the American Way's recent survey of evangelicals indicates a shift from the right is already happening.

For example, 52 percent supported GOP candidates in August, compared with 78 percent who voted for President Bush in 2004. Also, 68 percent of evangelicals think the country is on the wrong track, mirroring the 69 percent of all Americans who said so.

"One of the real things it will do is highlight the fault line between the broader agenda and those who want to focus on narrow hot-button issues," Jones said. "Haggard was a part of a broader conversation."

There was disagreement over how or whether politicians will keep religious leaders at arm's length because of the Haggard story.

"Politicians and religious figures associate with each other out of mutual interest," Green said. "Clearly Mr. Haggard and others supported Bush because they thought he would do the things pertaining to public policy they agreed with. And Bush thought they would help him get elected."

Evangelicals, he noted, represent a quarter of U.S. voters; politicians won't forgo that constituency, although they may pull away initially.

The Bush administration tried to distance itself from the scandal Friday, when the deputy White House press secretary, Tony Fratto, disavowed Haggard's influence within the Bush administration.

It's been widely reported that Haggard talked with Bush and his aides weekly, but Fratto denied that during a news conference. "He had been on a couple of calls, but was not a weekly participant in those calls," Fratto said. "I believe he's been to the White House one or two times."

Fratto also called the allegations "a personal issue" that won't affect voter turnout.

"I think they understand where the Republican Party is on issues that are important to them," he said, referring to evangelicals.

INTERIM

Amid chaos, new life born to church's new leader

THE GAZETTE

Acting Senior Pastor Ross Parsley became a dad amid the turmoil at New Life Church.

His wife, Aimee, gave birth to a 10-pound, 5-ounce baby boy Friday.

Parsley was named temporary head of the 14,000-member church Thursday when the Rev. Ted Haggard stepped down over allegations of sexual misconduct. He has been worship leader since 1991 and an associate senior pastor who led weekend services.

The birth was a ray of sunshine for church members and staff, as well as the family, said Sue Harrelson, Parsley's executive assistant said.

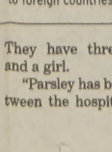
It is the Parsleys' fifth child. They have three other boys and a girl.

"Parsley has been rushing between the hospital and his duties at the church," Harrelson said. "He is really excited and looking forward to some time with Aimee and the baby."

Biography of Ross Parsley

Ross Parsley is now acting senior pastor of New Life Church

- Worship pastor at the church since about 1991 and has been senior associate. Responsible for all weekend services and oversees all music ministries.
- 1992 graduate of Oral Roberts University with bachelor's degree in communications. He led worship for the university chapel and directed international tours as associate music ministries director.
- For 20 years, has led worship in local churches and outreach teams to foreign countries.



Ross Parsley has temporarily taken over Pastor Ted Haggard's duties at New Life Church.

- Founder and president of the New Life School of Worship, which trains students from other churches on how to pastor.
- He is worship leader on Integrity Music's "Lord of the Harvest," "I Am Free" and other New Life music. A new recording, "My Savior Lives," is due out soon.
- Wife, Aimee, ministers with him in worship. They have five children, including one born Friday.

SOURCE: New Life Church

WASHINGTON

Haggard and the president

The subject of the Haggard scandal came up Friday during a White House press briefing.

Asked about Haggard's relationship to the president, Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto said Haggard has participated in conversations with the president and has met him at least once.

"Look, this is a personal issue for someone. It's something that Reverend Haggard needs to deal with, with his family and his church. And I'm not sure that there's any comment beyond that that's necessary," Fratto said.

NEW LIFE E-MAIL

Church leader tells members of confession

Text of an e-mail from the Rev. Ross Parsley of New Life Church in Colorado Springs to church members:

Dear New Lifers and friends of New Life Church,

Many of you have expressed concern about today's news regarding our pastor. Thank you all for your prayers and support, and for your concern for our church family.

As you've likely heard by now, Pastor Ted has voluntarily placed himself on administrative leave as New Life's senior pastor to allow our external board of overseers to work effectively. Below is the statement that we released to the media on Thursday afternoon.

Since that time, the board of overseers has met with Pastor Ted. It is important for you to know that he confessed to the overseers that some of the accusations against him are true. He has willingly and humbly submitted to the authority of the board of overseers, and will remain on administrative leave during the course of the investigation.

I am serving as the acting senior pastor of New Life Church. I met with the pastoral staff and elders Thursday night, and I assure you that the leadership team is strong and united. We remain resolute in our commitment to serving New Life Church and the people of our community.

Please continue to keep Ted and Gayle and their family in your prayers.

I love serving God with you all,
Ross Parsley

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

Dobson is 'heartsick'

Focus on the Family President James Dobson issued the following statement after learning the Rev. Ted Haggard had acknowledged some "indiscretions" involving accusations made against him by a gay prostitute:

"All of us at Focus on the Family are heartsick over the allegation, not yet confirmed, that Ted has had a private life with a homosexual for several years. We will await the outcome of this story, but the possibility that an illicit relationship has occurred is alarming to us and to millions of others.

"Ted has been my close friend and colleague for many years. He has been used mightily to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Colorado Springs and around the world. He will continue to be my friend, even if the worst allegations prove accurate. Nevertheless, sexual sin, whether homosexual or heterosexual, has serious consequences, and we are extremely concerned for Ted, his family and his church.

"We ask that the Focus on the Family constituency and Christians everywhere pray for Ted and his loved ones. Our hearts go out to all of them. Perhaps the allegations are false and the circumstances are not as we have heard. Either way, the situation has grave implications for the Cause of Christ, and we ask for the Lord's guidance and blessings in the days ahead."

TURMOIL AT NEW LIFE CHURCH

COLORADO SPRINGS IN THE NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

1989: Colorado Springs takes center stage in the nation's savings and loan crisis when 60 Minutes comes to focus on a real estate developer's land woes. The New York Times labels city "the foreclosure capital of the nation."

1992: A Springs group authors a statewide ballot measure that effectively bans gay rights; Colorado voters approve it. Colorado gets tagged as the "hate state" and the Springs becomes the epicenter for a national gay rights debate. Four years later, the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down the measure.

1996: A Wall Street Journal story suggests many MCI Communications Corp. employees who moved to Colorado Springs from the East Coast disliked the area's lack of diversity – with one employee comparing life in the Springs to "living in a loaf of Wonder Bread."

1998: El Paso County Commissioner Betty Beedy, already controversial for refusing to honor civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., goes on the national TV program "The View" and refers to "white, normal Americans" in a discussion about race.

2001: Seven armed felons who had escaped from a Texas prison are found in a Woodland Park RV campground after several weeks on the run, which prompts TV networks and newspapers to cover the climax of what the Washington Post calls the biggest manhunt since the search for Bonnie and Clyde.

2003: Allegations of numerous sexual assaults arise at the Air Force Academy. About the same time, the academy comes under fire for allegedly fostering an atmosphere of religious intolerance that favors Christian evangelism.

2005: AFA football coach Fisher DeBerry is reprimanded when he comments after a loss that the opposition had more "Afro-American kids" who "can run very, very well."

SOURCE: Gazette research

SPOTLIGHT: Effect depends on time in national media, expert says

FROM PAGE 1

calls a week or so to let this play out. As the first topic of conversation, it sets the wrong tone. Little things make the biggest difference, so if I can have it not come up right now, that would help.

"It just reinforces the conservative image (of the city)," Harvey said. "Once people get here, Colorado Springs does a good job of making people feel at home," he added.

But all the feel-good chamber of commerce and marketing efforts in the world won't have the reach of a major news story when it comes to how the rest of the nation sees us, said Bill Huddy, a University of Colorado at Colorado Springs communications professor.

"It's really the news events that shape the nation's perspective of us," Huddy said. "If you think of Waco, what do you think of?

"I think it will have reverberations for our community's reputation," Huddy added. "You can almost visualize what the cover of the next Time magazine will have on it."

Whether Time, 60 Minutes or PBS, Colorado Springs has gotten more than its 15 minutes of fame in the national media spotlight in recent years.

Among those stories: Allegations of sexual assaults and religious intolerance at the Air Force Academy, an elected official's crack about single moms and race on national television and a local group's campaign to ban gay rights that led to a landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling.

"For a community of our size in terms of its (population), we do garner a great deal of media," said Terry Sullivan, longtime president of Experience Colorado Springs, the city's convention and visitors bureau.

Good news, such as Money Magazine's ranking, triggers a heightened awareness of Colorado Springs among employers who are looking for places to expand or relocate, said Mike Kazmierski, president of the Greater Colorado Springs Economic Development Corp.

While he said he doesn't know for sure, Kazmierski conceded bad news and the negative connotation it creates for the city might cause other employers to scratch the Springs off their list.

"I hope people realize it's just a person, and not a community," Kazmierski said of the Haggard scandal. "It's just something we have to deal with. There are positive and negative bits of news about Colorado Springs all the time, and we just take the good with the bad."

When Jay Jesse interviewed several people for jobs Friday at Intelligent Software Solutions Inc., a Colorado Springs-based military contractor, Haggard wasn't mentioned, he said.

"What does come up is the reputation of Colorado Springs for having ultra-conservative politics," said Jesse, president of the firm. "This is not Washington, D.C., or San Francisco, and it makes it hard to recruit young, single people."

"I don't believe it affects outside recruiting. I wouldn't expect something like this to be much of a concern at all. We have a lot of military visitors and they all think this is a wonderful place. We recruit a lot of ex-military personnel."

Fred Veitch, a vice president with Springs real estate giant Nor'wood Development Group and a longtime resident, said news on the order of the Haggard scandal doesn't come up when he's trying to recruit retailers to town.

They pay attention to the Springs' economy and the financial performance of other businesses here. They will see the Springs as a desirable place to set up shop because of its quality of education, labor force and a generally favorable business climate, Veitch said.

"I don't think those issues are diminished or tainted by the news," Veitch said.

"We who live here have a sensitivity because it is our community, and none of us want to see anything that portrays our community in anything but a very positive light because it's a community we all love," Veitch said.

Sullivan, of the convention and visitors bureau, said the Haggard scandal won't have the potential to affect the city's image the way Amendment 2 did in the early 1990s. The 1992 ballot measure, approved by state voters but struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court four years later, effectively banned gay rights in Colorado.

Many in the country saw Amendment 2 as Colorado's rejection of gays and lesbians, which triggered protests nationwide, Sullivan said. The backlash against the Springs and Colorado lasted for at least a year, he said.

If the Haggard news remains part of the national media spotlight for a few days, it should pass soon, Sullivan said.

But if the story has legs for the next week, and if it's perceived to have affected the outcome of two ballot measures Tuesday on gay marriage and gay rights, then community leaders should be prepared to answer questions about Haggard for some time, he said.

In Mayor Lionel Rivera's view, however, the Haggard news shouldn't lead the national newscasts.

"I don't control the national media," Rivera said. "They tend to sensationalize everything. They try to turn something into a big story when it's not. And unfortunately, I think, that's what they're going to continue to do."

CONTACT THE WRITER: 636-0228 or rich.laden@gazette.com

Reporters Andrew Wineke and Wayne Heilman contributed to this story.

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TURMOIL AT NEW LIFE CHURCH

INTERVIEW

A talk with pastor near his house in Springs

A transcript of the Rev. Ted Haggard's exchange with a reporter Friday outside his Colorado Springs home.

Question: So can you take a moment and step out of the vehicle and just talk to us for a minute?
Haggard: Well we can't get into much, we're a little late for an appointment, but as we talked the other night, we're, we're so grateful that he failed the polygraph test this morning, and my accuser did. And we have gathered together this outside board of overseers and they're going through the process of investigation and finding out what needs to be done to me. You know I've put myself on, on an extended, what do we call it, suspension of my senior pastor's role. I resigned from the NAE because both of those roles are based on trust, and right now my trust is, is questionable.
Question: Right, well, and the man who's making the accusations, Mike Jones, did fail part of the polygraph, it said deception about having kind of a relationship, he did not fail or did not directly address the aspect of any use of illegal drugs.
Haggard: Yeah, and all of that's ...
Question: So the question is out there.
Haggard: All that's got to be processed through, and I'm sure they're going to do that.
Question: And I know that (unintelligible) ... but I have to ask you again, have you used meth?
Haggard: No, I have not.
Question: OK, and the voice expert that is in Denver that was hired by KUSA.
Haggard: Yeah.
Question: Has matched now 18 of the words left on the voicemail message.
Haggard: Yeah, I did call him. I did call him.
Question: And what did you call him about?
Haggard: I called him to buy some meth, but I threw it away.
Question: And who were you buying the meth for?
Haggard: No one. I was buying it for me, but I never used it.
Question: Have you ever used meth before?
Haggard: No, I have not. And I did not ever use it with him.
Question: And did you ever have sex with him?
Haggard: No, I did not.
Question: And at what point did you decide to throw away the meth?
Haggard: Right after. I never kept it very long because it was wrong. I was tempted, I bought it, but I never used it.
Question: And how did you know that he would sell it to you?
Haggard: He told me about it. I went there for a massage, so, OK we're late for an appointment, and so, but thank you for your work.
Question: How did you find him to get a massage from him?
Haggard: A referral.
Question: From?
Haggard: From the hotel I was staying at.
Question: A hotel where?
Haggard: I've stayed a lot of hotels in Denver because I write in Denver, so. OK.
Question: OK.
Haggard: All right, thank you.

COMMUNITY REACTION

Gay activists empathize with Haggard

Some hope he understands their trials

By R. SCOTT RAPPOLD
THE GAZETTE

Local gay activists, who have long been at odds with the Rev. Ted Haggard, expressed sympathy Friday for the embattled minister.

Several, though, said they hope he now understands what they go through every day in Colorado Springs.

"Whether or not Ted Haggard is gay or straight, yesterday he began experiencing some of the ridicule experienced by gays and lesbians on a daily basis, in part because of the work of his church," said Ryan Acker, executive director of the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Center.

Haggard has been one of the most consistent voices against gay rights in the city since founding New Life Church in 1985. He became president of the National Association of Evangelicals in 2003, and was a lead proponent of this year's Colorado ballot measure to define marriage as between a man and a woman.

In 1991, he opposed a city measure to protect gays from discrimination. The next year, he supported a statewide ballot measure prohibiting such laws.

Frank Whitworth, a longtime gay activist here, formed the group Ground Zero in opposition to the ballot measure, which passed but was ultimately ruled unconstitutional.

Though he and Haggard have diametric views, he said Friday he feels "sad" for Haggard.

"I really feel sorry and my empathy goes out to him for everything he's suffering," Whitworth said.

Haggard's public anti-gay stance could be a case of self-denial, Whitworth said.

"There are gay people who become very homophobic as a rejection of themselves, and they can become very harmful to the community," Whitworth said.

Despite Haggard's record of opposing gay rights, Whitworth said he doesn't consider him as much an enemy to gays as others, including Focus on the Family leader James Dobson.

"I think he's a good man," Whitworth said of Haggard. "If this is true, he's had a lot of things affecting his life and a lot of self-rejection."

The Rev. Dan Koeshall, pastor of Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church in Colorado Springs, is gay, as are most of the church's 110 members.

"It's sad. It's sad for him, for his family, for his church," said Koeshall, who doesn't know Haggard. "Even though he has had, in the past, a record of separating himself from the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community, I feel like we're still part of the same family."

Koeshall said he hopes Haggard changes his views.

"The greatest message that Jesus gave us is love your God and love your neighbor," Koeshall said. "I haven't seen a lot of loving your neighbor in his past actions."

CONTACT THE WRITER: 476-1605 or scott.rappold@gazette.com

SCANDAL: Haggard will address congregation

FROM PAGE 1

but I never used it," he said, smiling constantly from the driver's seat of his pickup as he answered questions outside his home Friday morning.

His wife sat silently next to him; three of his children were in the backseat.

Thursday, Haggard resigned his leadership post at the National Association of Evangelicals and placed himself on administrative leave from the 14,000-member New Life Church.

Haggard, dressed in a blue plaid shirt, let his truck idle as he answered questions.

Haggard noted that his religious positions "are based on trust, and right now my trust is questionable."

Haggard told a Denver television station Wednesday that he didn't know Jones, but he admitted Friday that he called him.

"Yeah, I did call him. I did call him," Haggard said. "I called him to buy some meth, but I threw it away ... It was wrong."

Haggard said he met Jones through a referral for a massage from "a hotel I was staying at."

Jones scoffed at the explanation, telling MSNBC, "No concierge in Denver would have referred me." He said he had advertised himself as an escort only in gay publications or on gay Web sites.

Jones, 49, also denied selling meth to Haggard.

"Never," he told MSNBC. Haggard "met someone else that I had hooked him up with to buy it."

Jones submitted to a polygraph Friday morning, but the test detected some deception. The polygrapher said he wanted Jones to repeat the test at a later date when he is rested.

Jones told The Gazette his acquaintance with Haggard — whom he knew as "Art" — lasted about three years, with Haggard calling him every month or so and paying him for sex. Haggard's middle name is Arthur.

Jones said he first learned Haggard's real identity about six months ago when he spotted him on a television program. When he learned about Haggard's positions on same-sex marriage, "I got to tell you, I started getting pissed."

Jones said he wanted to expose Haggard partly because this year's election includes two gay rights issues on Colorado's ballot. Amendment 43 would define marriage as between a man and a woman, and Referendum I would give same-sex couples certain legal rights.

Haggard has been an outspoken supporter of Amendment 43 — and made a reference to the upcoming election in his Oct. 29 sermon.

"Father, help us this next week and a half as we go into national elections," he said. "Father, we pray that lies would be exposed. We pray that deception would be exposed."

Confronted with Jones' claims, Haggard initially denied the charges on Denver's KUSA-TV.

"I did not have a homosexual relationship with a man in Denver," he said. "I am steady with my wife. I'm faithful to my wife."

He also told the station he'd never done drugs. He didn't even drink, he added.

In a voice-mail message Jones provided to KUSA, Haggard says: "Hey, I was just calling to see if we could get any more. Either $100 or $200 supply."

Denver police said they are "watching this situation unfold and plan on reaching out to the involved parties for information on crimes that may have been committed."

Possession of meth is a felony. The value of the drug varies; in Colorado Springs, a gram costs about $110, police said.

Friday, the Rev. Ross Parsley sent an e-mail to some New Life Church staff saying that the church's four-member board of overseers — a group of pastors not connected to the church — had met with Haggard. It also told of his confession. Parsley will take the helm of the church until Haggard's status has been resolved.

No timetable was set for release of the board's findings, although church officials said board members and Haggard would address the congregation in some manner at Sunday services. The church services are at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

The National Association of Evangelicals' executive committee voted to accept Haggard's resignation after they learned of his admissions.

The Bible holds Christian leaders to a higher standard of accountability, a statement read.

"Therefore, it is especially serious when a pastor and prominent Christian leader deliberately violates God's standards of conduct."

Because of the "seriousness of Rev. Haggard's misconduct," the statement read, "an extended period of recovery will be appropriate."

Haggard heads Colorado's largest megachurch and has been an influential leader in the national evangelical movement — a movement some say was instrumental in getting President Bush re-elected in 2004.

"Pastor Ted had a fondness for President Bush and an appreciation of his moral stance," said Rob Brendle, an associate pastor at New Life.

But Haggard isn't expecting Bush's support, he said. "We understand how politics work."

He said Haggard will probably leave this area to keep his kids from the media spotlight.

Television crews and reporters from around the country have converged on the New Life campus, milling about the parking lot and interviewing church members.

The attention may be intense, but scandal in the pulpit is not uncommon. Focus on the Family's pastoral care center receives 400 to 600 calls a month from pastors, many of whom struggle with addiction or sexual issues.

"When Ted Haggard is accused of something like this, I'm not surprised of the accusation because I deal with it so much," said the Rev. H.B. London, head of Focus on the Family's pastoral center. "I am surprised of the man."

London said it's possible for wayward pastors to return to the pulpit, but it takes time — sometimes as much as five years: He said Haggard should be remorseful and confess his sins, though the congregation doesn't necessarily need to hear all details.

"But coming back to the same congregation is many times difficult because people have drawn their own conclusions."

Larry Magnuson, executive director of the pastoral retreat SonScape Ministries, said churches should be more forgiving of wayward pastors.

"I am a believer in grace," he said. "If we're not about giving people another chance, then we really don't have a message for the world."

Focus on the Family founder James Dobson, who on Thursday criticized the media as "unconscionable" for reporting the allegations, issued a statement Friday saying his organization is "heartsick."

"We will await the outcome of this story, but the possibility that an illicit relationship has occurred is alarming to us and to millions of others," Dobson said.

Dobson said he and Haggard will continue to be friends "even if the worst allegations prove accurate."

A Colorado Springs pastor said the revelations should not lead to Haggard's dismissal because Haggard said he did not have sex with Jones and never used the drugs he purchased.

"I am praying hard for Ted," said the Rev. Donald Armstrong, rector of Grace Episcopal and St. Stephen's Church. "Somebody like Ted, who's so prominent, is going to be under constant attack from evil and temptation. So it's hard for any of us to understand the level of temptation or the level of attack he's had to deal with, but if this is the case then he walked up to the edge and was victorious, and I think we ought to celebrate that."

Some of the gay activists who Haggard has labeled "immoral" expressed sympathy. But they said they also hope he now understands what they go through every day.

"Whether or not Ted Haggard is gay or straight, yesterday he began experiencing some of the ridicule experienced by gays and lesbians on a daily basis, in part because of the work of his church," said Ryan Acker, executive director of the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Center.

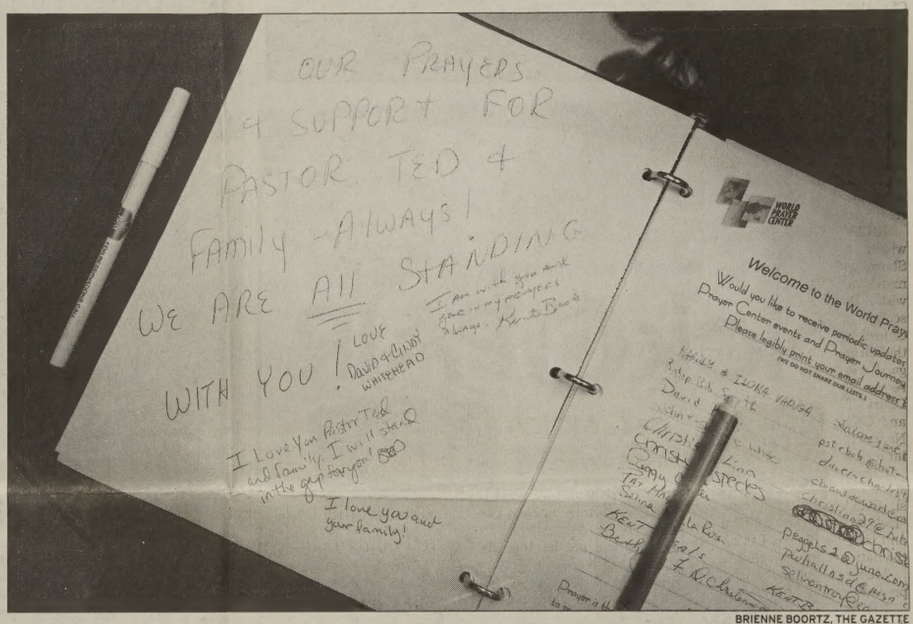
"It's sad. It's sad for him, for his family, for his church," said the Rev. Dan Koeshall, pastor of Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church in Colorado Springs. Koeshall is gay, as are most members.

At New Life's college-age service, The Mill, pastor Aaron Stern talked Friday night about Haggard with the more than 1,000 people there. He said the last few days have been a "shaking experience" for him personally, but called this time a "test" for their Christian beliefs.

"Is our trust in man, or is our trust in God?" he asked.

Outside, a man sat in a lawn chair at the New Life parking entrance, holding a sign saying "God still loves you, Ted. So do I."

Gazette reporters DeeDee Correll, Perry Swanson, Scott Rappold, Pam Zubeck, Carol McGraw and Andrea Brown contributed to this story.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BRIENNE BOORTZ, THE GAZETTE

Supportive words for Ted Haggard in a book at the World Prayer Center at New Life Church on Friday.

The Gazette

About New Life Church

Location: 11025 Voyager
Stated purpose: "To know, worship and obey God according to the Scriptures."
Founded: In 1985 in the unfinished basement of the Rev. Ted Haggard, who said he was acting on a vision he had on a camping trip on Pikes Peak.
Number of members: 14,000
Ministry: Multiple services, more than 1,000 small groups for members; schools including a leadership training academy, training program for leaders of churches, collegiate internships and and a seminary; student programs.
Includes: A $19 million auditorium that seats 7,500 people; a $5.5 million World Prayer Center that opened in 1998 that is home to several evangelical Christian nonprofit groups, weekly worship services, weddings and conferences.

SCIENCE

U.S. wins additional use of ozone-harming pesticide

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Bush administration on Friday won international approval for U.S. farmers to use thousands of tons of a potent, ozone-destroying pesticide without having to dip substantially into large stockpiles that recently were revealed.

The pesticide, methyl bromide, was banned under an international treaty nearly two years ago except for uses deemed critical. U.S. officials have secured exemptions to the ban so growers can use it to kill soil pests for tomatoes, strawberries and other crops in agricultural states like California and Florida.

At a meeting Friday in New Delhi, treaty partners approved use of just over 5,900 tons for those needs in 2008, said Michael Williams, spokesman for the Montreal Protocol, which works to phase out substances that deplete the ozone layer.

U.S. stockpiles were estimated at nearly 11,000 tons at the end of last year, but the nations said Americans can meet the need by manufacturing more than 5,000 tons of new methyl bromide. The stockpiles could then be drawn down to meet the rest of the agreed-on use.

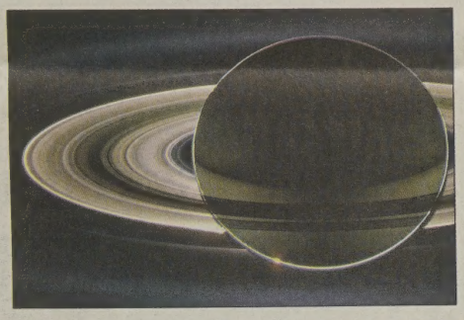
The allotment is a reduction from the administration's request for nearly 7,100 tons and continues the downward trend in annual methyl bromide production and use.

The decision came over the objections of European nations and despite the recommendation of the treaty's own technical committee. That panel had urged a more substantial cut in the U.S. request on grounds that other countries have proved that alternative chemicals and methods can successfully replace methyl bromide.

The outcome also brought criticism from environmental advocates attending the session.

The Bush administration contends the stockpiles existed before the 2005 ban and thus are not subject to a treaty rule allowing new production only if existing, available stockpiles cannot cover the need.

LOOKING PAST SATURN TO EARTH



A recent photo from the Cassini spacecraft shows the planet Saturn, and if you look between its rings, upper left, there's a pinprick of light. That dot is Earth. The image is the second taken of our planet from deep space. For other photos, visit saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/home/index.cfm.

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